

BOOTH HOUSE
SAYLESVILLE, WISCONSIN
Waukesha Co.

H.A.B.S. No Wis/32
HABS
WIS
67- SAYVI,
1-

• PHOTOGRAPHS •
WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT No 28
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Building Survey
Alexander C. Guth District Officer
1249 North Franklin Place, Milwaukee, Wis.

67-SAYVI,

1-

BOOTH HOUSE
Saylesville, Waukesha County, Wisconsin

Owner (or Custodian). J.C. Booth

Date of Erection. 1850

Architect. None known

Builder. John Rankin and Charles Smith - mason work; Alexander McFarlin - carpenter.

Present Condition. Good

Number of Stories. Two

Materials of Construction. Exterior walls of local stone.

Other Existing Records. None known

Additional Data. (See following pages.)

The Booth House.

The Booth House is located near the village of Saylesville, the latter being about seven miles west of Waukesha.

The erection date is 1850. John Rankin, a Scotchman, bought the land from the government in 1839 and erected thereon a log cabin. This he occupied until he completed this larger house. He lived in it but two years, when he passed away. His widow married her husband's chief helper and lived with him in the house for many years. The names of the builders of many of the old time houses in Wisconsin belong to the ages*, but in this case it is a bit different as the names of these individuals are known. This is because the names were procured from old settlers who are the descendants of these early day builders and are still alive today (1935). John Rankin and Charles Smith did the mason work and Alexander McFarlin the carpenter work. A son of the above-named Charles Smith still lives in the city of Waukesha near by.

The exterior walls of the house are constructed entirely of stone which was quarried nearby. The design of the house is one which adapts itself more to this material than possibly any of the other stone houses included in the entire survey. This design of the house should, and may readily, be termed outstanding. To an architect

* i.e. names are unknown.

there is something uncanny about the way some of the purely architectural features have been handled. It seems quite impossible that an untrained practitioner should have been responsible for these. The work really bears the imprint of some master designer's hand. But as far as can be learned no such individual existed. The results attained were simply an accident and the work of some carpenter who may have received his early training in the eastern states, possibly in Pennsylvania where work of this character prevailed.

To say that the house has architectural charm and distinction is putting it mildly. It has these and much more. Among the features which are specially noteworthy are the main entrance and the cornice. These are most satisfactory in every respect. The rear elevation is quite picturesque in its gable groupings. This portion of the structure dates from a later date than the front.

The interior has many attractive features. In fact few houses surveyed have produced such splendidly wrought finish woodwork. The clever handling of the purely architectural features on the interior is astonishing. The treatment around the windows in this modest house is dignified and rich enough to fit into a mansion. All in all this house would be a real credit to a modern day architect with scholarly attainments.